

THE TRULY HORRIFIC HISTORY OF DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB

Part 1: HOW THE FOLK OF DUNFERMLINE GOT SOME LEISURE TIME AND SPENT IT ON A NEW FOOTBALL TEAM

Dunfermline Athletic was founded on 2 June 1885 at a meeting in the Old Inn pub, near Dunfermline Abbey.

There was a bit of an argument because this was a break-away from Dunfermline Cricket Club, where football had been used as a winter exercise sport as early as 1874.

However by 1885, the football section wanted independence, (and not to pay membership fees to the cricket club as well).

So the first game for Dunfermline Athletic Football Club was at East End Park on 13 June 1885, and was a 2-1 win over Edinburgh University. This club would surely be victorious forever!



"What say we play football instead, eh chaps?"



Tough conditions working down the mines.

In Victorian times, people began to get more leisure time as daily working hours gradually went down to as little as 10 hours per day, and for the first time in the 1870s skilled and professional people were given Saturday afternoon off work.

This became normal for all workers in the 1890s and the government made laws called Factory Acts.

The main sources of work in Dunfermline were linen mills, coal mines and work on farms.

As early as 1886, Dunfermline Athletic were playing in front of crowds of several thousand at East End Park on a Saturday afternoon.

Want to know more?
<http://bit.ly/historypars1>

THE TRULY HORRIFIC HISTORY OF DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB

PART 2: HOW THE DEMON DRINK TOOK OUT THE ATHLETIC KEEPER

In 1911, Dunfermline Athletic FC signed a star goalkeeper from Bathgate, who went by the name of Maurice Slavin.



Not the actual Maurice Slavin in action, but this is what he would have looked like. Probably.

He helped the Pars to win their first major trophy, which was the Scottish Qualifying Cup in 1912.

However, Slavin, like many people of the time, liked to drink too much.

This made the Dunfermline captain, Jim Brown, send the keeper off the park in a league game when it became clear that Slavin was very drunk, and was having difficulty even picking up the ball!

Dunfermline Athletic eventually lost the game by 7 goals to 2!

The Temperance movement in Scotland was a group of people who were against the selling of alcohol.

This Temperance movement did not want men to drink alcohol and wanted people to be teetotal (not drink ANY alcohol at all).

They asked the government to make alcohol laws to ban the making and selling of it.

In Scotland, this reached its height in 1913, with the passing of the Temperance Act (kind of law) which let towns ban the sale of alcohol.

After 1920 both Airdrie and Kirkintilloch voted to remove all public houses (pubs) but this law was never passed in most of Scotland including Dunfermline.

However the Act remained in force until it was finally changed in 1976!



Many women made it clear that they didn't want to see wages wasted on booze!

Want to know more? <http://bit.ly/historypars2>

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PART 3: HOW THE FIRST WORLD WAR CAME TO DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC

In Dunfermline, most of the football team volunteered for War Service, and the regular football leagues were stopped by the end of 1914.

In addition, the army commandeered (took over) East End Park for keeping horses and heavy transport wagons on. We think the grass was very well manured!

Some of the players volunteered for the local regiment which was the Black Watch, and others joined the Scottish Sporting Battalion, often known as McCrae's Battalion.

Sir George McCrae, the colonel, was married to a Dunfermline girl, from the New Row, and many local men went to this battalion (16th Royal Scots).

Unfortunately this unit was right in the battle front when the British Army attacked on 1 July 1916 on the Somme. Many Dunfermline men died, as part of the 20,000 killed that day.



Men waiting in line to go 'over the top' during the Battle of the Somme.



David Hunter - soldier, VC recipient and Pars fan.

Included in the numbers were Davie Izatt, the Dunfermline left back, and Jimmy Morton, a member of the Committee of the Club.

Dunfermline had two local men who won the Victoria Cross in that war. They were:

John Erskine, a young shop owner, from Park Avenue. He won his VC in 1916 for rescuing wounded comrades whilst under enemy fire. Sadly, he was killed in 1917 trying to repeat the feat.

David Hunter, a coal miner from Kingseat, won his medal for refusing to surrender in 1918, although his little group of seven men were surrounded. They held out until help arrived two days later.

David was a regular supporter of Dunfermline Athletic for more than another forty years.

Want to know more?
<http://bit.ly/historypars3>

THE TRULY HORRIFIC HISTORY OF DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB

PART 4: HOW DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC SURVIVED THE GREAT DEPRESSION OF THE 1920s AND 1930s

Between the two World Wars, Dunfermline Athletic had a series of financial troubles.

This was perhaps not surprising as the West Fife area was badly hit by the strikes in the coal mining industry as the miners fought to avoid wage cuts, the lack of demand for linen, and the closure of Rosyth Dockyard between 1925 and 1938.



Right colours, wrong sport...

In 1925, the Chairman called a special meeting at the St Margaret Hall to ask supporters to buy £1 shares in the club to keep it in business.

By 1929, a cut in players' wages was put in place and they were even being given shares instead of cash. In 1936, bankruptcy was only staved off by the sale of the rights to greyhound racing for £2,500. There was a greyhound track round the pitch at that time.

Football results were largely poor and the club seemed to have gone to the dogs (sorry!)

In 1938, the Dunfermline Press newspaper noted that St Mirren would not agree to cheap admission for the unemployed, a scheme which Dunfermline had used to help both attendances and the long term out-of-work.

The 1930s are remembered for mass unemployment. However there was already mass unemployment in the 1920s in Britain.

For most of the decade it was between 10% and 12%. Then, in the early 1930s, the economy was struck by real depression. By the start of 1933 unemployment in Britain was 22.8%.

However unemployment fell a lot in 1933, 1934 and 1935. By January 1936 it stood at 13.9%. This fall continued, and by 1938 the level of unemployment was down to 10%.



A march protesting against high unemployment

However although a bit of a recovery took place in Britain in the mid and late 1930s there was still an economic depression in the areas in the North of England, Scotland (including Fife) and South Wales.

On the other hand new industries such as car and aircraft making and electronics grew in the Midlands and the South of England where unemployment was quite low.

The problems of depression and high unemployment were only really solved though, by the arrival of the Second World War, which boosted demand and started industry booming again.

Want to know more? <http://bit.ly/historypars4>

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PART 5: HOW DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC ADVANCED THROUGH WORLD WAR TWO

When the Second World War broke out in September 1939, it looked as if the football club, along with much of the population, would be evacuated to somewhere less likely to be attacked by enemy aircraft.

The Rosyth naval base and large air force and army headquarters nearby meant that Dunfermline found itself as a good target for large scale bombing. As a result, players' contracts were cancelled and the army took over East End Park.

In the event, it proved not to be so bad, and gradually friendly football matches returned with visiting players asked to play, but there were no leagues or cups to be played for until after the end of the war in 1945.

A visiting team from Glasgow Rangers saw a request from the management of Dunfermline Athletic "The Management request that all spectators carry their gas masks".

Six weeks into World War II, on 16 October 1939, the first air attack over Britain took place, above the Firth of Forth near North Queensferry. Nine German planes took part in the raid, which their crews soon discovered was at the extreme limit of their bombers' range.

Anti-air-raid gunners on the Forth were engaged in a gun-drill at the time, and quickly had to exchange their dummy ammunition for live as the German planes appeared overhead.



Crowds gather round one of the downed Heinkels

The Germans' target was the Royal Navy fleet and base at Rosyth. They damaged three boats: the light cruiser HMS Southampton and two cruisers, HMS Mohawk and HMS Edinburgh.

Supermarine Spitfires of 603 Squadron 'City of Edinburgh' were quickly scrambled from Turnhouse Airfield, as was 602 'City of Glasgow' Squadron based at Drem in East Lothian.

They shot down two German Heinkel planes over the Forth and a bomber off the May Island. The crew of a local fishing boat picked up two German survivors. These were the first enemy aircraft of the war to be brought down over Britain. (Old footage: <http://bit.ly/historyparsheinkel>)

Though the Forth Rail Bridge was not targeted during this raid, many passengers on a train crossing at the time thought they were the target.



A Second World War gas mask. Imagine trying to eat your bridle through that!

Want to know more? <http://bit.ly/historypars5>

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PART 6 : SUCCESS AT LAST FOR THE PARS

In March 1960 Dunfermline needed a new manager and the owners of the club gave the job to the Glasgow Celtic youth coach. He was called Jock Stein.

He had played football, but was never a great player. Would he become a good manager? No one knew and only time would tell...

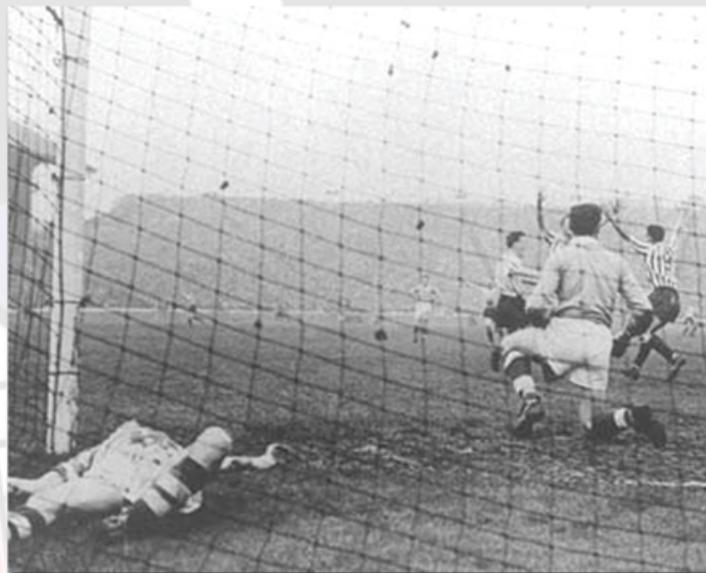
The Pars were near the bottom of the league, but he managed to get the players playing much better and, after winning all of their final six games of the season, they escaped being relegated to the 2nd division in May 1960.

In his second season the Pars played even better and in April 1961 reached the final of the Scottish Cup for the first time ever!

In that final the Pars had to play Celtic. They were Jock's old team and he knew most of them well. The game finished 0-0, so a replay was held on the Wednesday night.

The Pars won that game 2-0 and for the first time (but not the last) brought the Scottish Cup to Dunfermline! Footage from the game can be viewed at <http://bit.ly/historypars1961SC>.

That evening, the players paraded the cup down the High Street on an open top bus, in front of thousands of happy townsfolk!



Pars players celebrate as Dave Thomson scores the first goal in the Scottish Cup Final win over Celtic.



Bringing the Cup home to Dunfermline, as thousands of fans surround the team bus.

Want to know more? <http://bit.ly/historypars6>

THE TRULY HORRIFIC HISTORY OF DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB

PART 7: HOW DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC AND THE BEATLES CONQUERED EUROPE AT THE SAME TIME

In the summer of 1962, the Main Stand was built on Halbeath Road, using the money from winning the cup. Although it has been refurbished and improved several times since, it is still one of the icons (landmarks) of Scottish football.

Along with larger stands came improved public address systems, which were used not only for public safety announcements but also to play music.

The Bluebell Polka by Jimmy Shand was soon established as a club favourite, and win, lose or draw, the crowds at East End Park have left the stadium to this accordion tune ever since.

1962 was also the year in which The Beatles became the most popular band in Britain and Europe, and ever since then current hits have been played before and after games, along with appeals to move cars and pick up lost children.



The Beatles, Paul, Ringo, John and George.

The Pars got to the final again in 1965, but this time lost to Celtic 3-2. They were also third in the league that year and only ONE POINT behind the winners Kilmarnock!

However, in 1968 the Pars won the Scottish Cup once more when they beat Hearts 3-1 in the final at Hampden Park.

During these times Dunfermline Athletic was also playing football regularly in Europe. Between 1961 and 1970 the twenty home games played at East End Park saw 17 wins, 2 draws and only one defeat. At one point the Pars won 12 home European matches in a row at East End, a Scottish record!



Beating Anderlecht 3-2 in 1970. Sadly the Pars missed a penalty (above) and lost on away goals.

In all, the club reached two European quarter-finals and one semi-final. Highlights of this time include the defeats of English teams, Everton and West Bromwich Albion, as well as Stuttgart of Germany, Gwardia Warsaw of Poland, Olympiakos Athens of Greece and Bordeaux of France.

Want to know more? <http://bit.ly/historypars7>

THE TRULY HORRIFIC HISTORY OF DUNFERMLINE ATHLETIC FOOTBALL CLUB

PART 8: THE LATEST CHAPTER! HOW DUNFERMLINE CAME TO BE OWNED BY HUNDREDS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

Most football clubs in Britain are owned by one person. However this is changing, with an ever-increasing number owned either wholly or partly by Supporters' Trusts.



When the club needed it, the fans were there to help.

So the Club belongs to about a thousand separate families, and lots of people help out by giving their time for free to help Dunfermline Athletic. Indeed the Dunfermline Athletic Supporters' Club shop has raised over £30,000 in less than three years by volunteers selling goods donated by fans

This might mean being a Ball Girl or Boy, helping paint the stadium, assisting disabled people on match days, working on projects in primary schools or in lots and lots of other ways.

People saved the club from extinction because it is very important to the community of Dunfermline and it has been for many generations of West Fife folk.



Thousands and thousands of Pars fans together at Hampden for the 2004 Scottish Cup Final.

At Dunfermline, the Pars Supporters' Trust is the largest shareholder with close to 30% of the shares. This came about in 2013 because of a financial crisis. Hundreds of Dunfermline Athletic supporters saved the Club from disappearing.

Lots of people, including several Supporters' Clubs, put in new money to a new Community Interest Company (which is a bit similar to a charity) and no one person owns more than 10% of the shares.



The Pars have great links with local schools.

This football club belongs to all of us, and we're delighted to share it with you.

Want to know more?

<http://bit.ly/historypars8>

Thanks for reading! We hope you enjoyed...

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